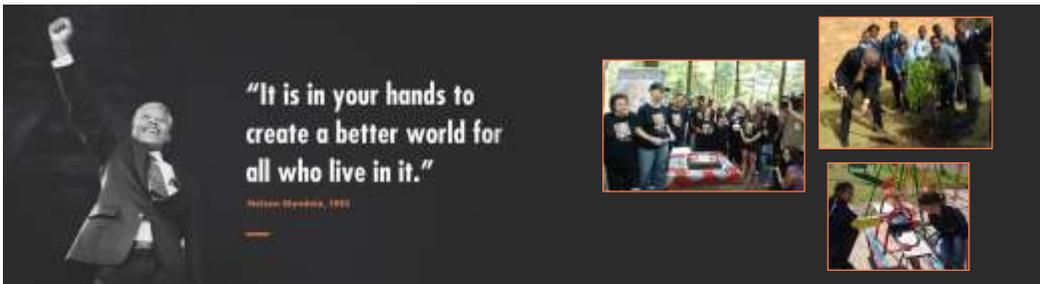


Every year on Nelson Mandela's birthday, the 18th of July, South Africans are called to contribute 67 minutes of their time to community service. This is done to honour Madiba's legacy of service to others.

Mandela Day seeks to empower communities everywhere. People and companies are encouraged to participate in Mandela Day and do something that will help someone in need or aid in the development of a community or our nation.

*"It's in your hands to make the world a better place."*

This is what Nelson Mandela said during his 90th birthday celebrations when he was appealing to all citizens to rise up and stand for good.



**What will you or your organisation be doing for 67 minutes in 2015? If you have not decided yet, here are some ideas:**

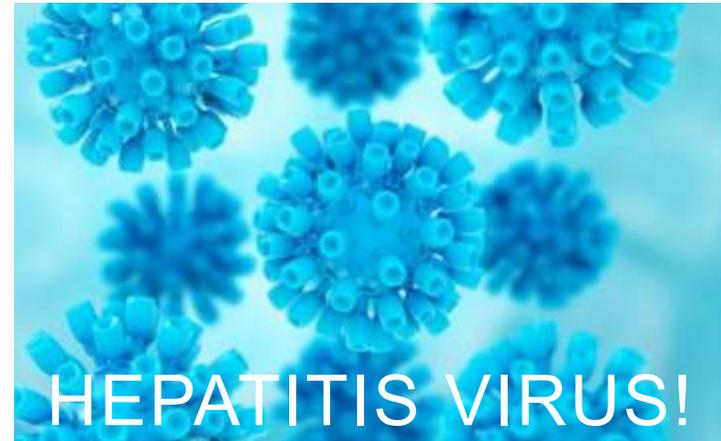
- Host a charity drive and collect blankets for the homeless.
- Serve soup and bread to the homeless.
- Volunteer at a children's orphanage.
- Visit some of the elderly in an old age home.
- Collect toys and books for children at an orphanage.
- Plan a community clean up and go out and pick up all the papers found in the parks etc.
- Plant some trees.

These are some basic ideas. There are so many ways to spend your 67 minutes on Mandela Day... **do whatever you can and make a difference!**

**Prevent Hepatitis – It's up to you, become #hepaware**

**This month we focus on:**

- Hepatitis
- Mandela Day



The liver's main job is to filter the blood coming from the digestive tract, before passing it to the rest of the body. The liver also detoxifies chemicals and metabolises drugs. As it does so, the liver secretes bile that ends up back in the intestines. Bile is stored in the gall bladder. The liver also makes proteins important for blood clotting and other functions.

The main cause of liver disease in our country is alcohol! Gall stones are also quite common. It's quite incredible that the body can produce a stone! Gallstones are pieces of solid material that form in the gallbladder. These stones develop because cholesterol and pigments in bile sometimes form hard particles.

**The two main types of gallstones are:**  
Cholesterol stones (80%) & Pigment stones

- Causes**
- Genetics
  - Body weight
  - Decreased motility (movement) of the gallbladder
  - Diet

To prevent liver disease, reduce alcohol, weight and if there is a history in the family, have an ultrasound within your mid-30s.

*Dr. RB Malkin*

**References**

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[http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial\\_viral/hepatitis.html#](http://kidshealth.org/parent/infections/bacterial_viral/hepatitis.html#) [http://www.hepb.org/pdf/the\\_liver.pdf](http://www.hepb.org/pdf/the_liver.pdf)  
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## What is the liver?

The liver is a large, meaty organ that sits on the right side of the belly. The liver's main job is to filter the blood coming from the digestive tract, before passing it to the rest of the body.

## Liver Health

If your body was a car, your liver would be considered the engine. The Liver performs hundreds of vital functions to make sure your body runs smoothly.

### Most important functions of the liver:

It stores vitamins, sugar and iron to help give your body energy.

It controls the production and removal of cholesterol.

It clears your blood of waste products, drugs and other poisonous substances.

It allows clotting (scabs) to stop excessive bleeding after cuts or injuries.

It produces immune factors and removes bacteria from the bloodstream to fight infection.

It releases a substance called "bile" to help digest food and absorb important nutrients.

*It is important to ensure that your liver does not get infected by conditions like hepatitis.*



## What is "Hepatitis" and how does it affect my liver?

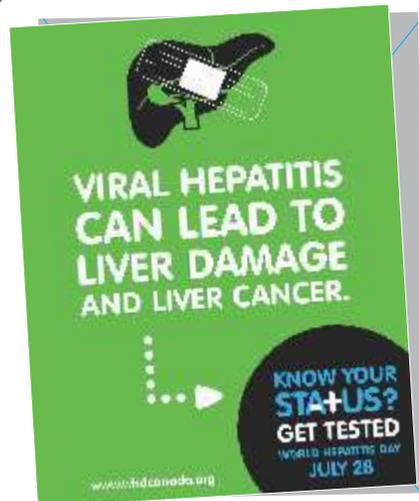
The medical term "Hepatitis" literally means "inflammation of the liver." Chronic inflammation of the liver may result in liver damage or failure if left untreated. "Hepatitis" can be caused by many different factors:

- drinking too much alcohol,
- traumatic injury,
- autoimmune disorders,
- an adverse drug reaction,
- unprotected sex, or
- a virus



## The Most Common Types of Hepatitis

There are five different hepatitis viruses, hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. The most common are **Hepatitis A, B and C**.



## Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A is spread mainly through eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated by the faeces of an infected person. It can also be spread by eating raw shellfish that has come from water contaminated by sewage.

**Prevention:** There is a vaccination for hepatitis A. Treatment within a few weeks of exposure to the virus can also bring short term immunity. You can reduce the risk of exposure by practicing good hygiene and sanitation, and avoiding drinking water that has come from a potentially unsafe source.

**Treatment:** As hepatitis A only causes acute hepatitis, the body is often able to clear the infection itself within a few weeks. However, hepatitis A infections can sometimes cause further complications.



## Hepatitis B

*What is Hepatitis B?*

Hepatitis B is the most common serious liver infection in the world. It is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which attacks liver cells and can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, or liver failure if it is not detected and managed. The virus is transmitted through contact with infected blood and bodily fluids that contain blood.

*How can the Hepatitis B virus damage my liver?*

A healthy liver is soft and flexible. With a chronic Hepatitis B infection, however, the liver is constantly under attack by the virus and eventually it can become hardened over time. Some of the changes and liver damage that can occur are described below:

**Fibrosis:** After becoming inflamed, the liver tries to repair itself by forming tiny scars. This scarring, called "fibrosis," makes it difficult for the liver to do its job. As damage continues, many scars form and begin to join together, leading to the next stage, cirrhosis.

**Cirrhosis:** With a chronic HBV infection, large areas of the liver can become permanently scarred and nodules may form. Blood cannot flow

freely through scarred liver tissue. This causes the liver to begin to shrink and become hard.

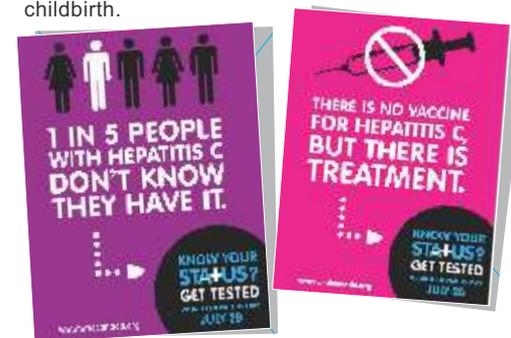
Cirrhosis has many causes. In South Africa, chronic alcoholism is the most common cause.

**Liver Failure:** If cirrhosis becomes very severe, liver failure can occur. This means the liver is unable to filter wastes, toxins, and drugs from the blood. It can no longer produce the clotting factors necessary to stop bleeding.

**Liver Cancer:** Cirrhosis can sometimes set the stage for liver cancer. People living with chronic hepatitis B infections are at high risk for developing liver cancer and must be tested once or twice a year for early detection.

## Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is mainly spread through blood-to-blood contact. In rare cases it can be transmitted through certain sexual practices and during childbirth.



## Recognise the Signs and Symptoms

**Hepatitis, in its early stages, may cause flu-like symptoms, including:**

- malaise (a general ill feeling)
- fever
- muscle aches
- loss of appetite
- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- jaundice (a yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes)

However some people with Hepatitis may have no symptoms at all and may not even know they're infected.